

Ready to Launch?: Preparing Tutors for Next Steps

The central question of this panel is: What responsibility do writing center administrators have for preparing tutors for their post-writing center careers and lives and what would such preparation look like?

In recent years, writing center scholarship has touched on this issue (see Welsch 2008; Whalen 2009; Dinitz & Kiedaisch, 2009; Hughes, et al. 2010); this panel is extension of this scholarship by different administrators at three different universities. Our panel discusses the difficulties and successes we've had in shaping and in assessing professional/career development for our staffs based on the models and suggestions in the writing center literature.

Speaker 1 will review the relevant scholarship on preparing writing tutors for post-writing center lives and work and articulate why administrators ought to be concerned with tutor professional/career development.

Speaker 2 will talk about how one university writing center teaches tutors how to encapsulate their writing center work in resumes/CVs and in interviews and how the same university has developed an exit survey to gauge what skills and aptitudes tutors think they will need as they graduate from the university.

Speaker 3 will talk about the committee structure instituted at her university writing center which offers consultants opportunities to engage in leadership roles, develop writing center programming, assess writing center programming, and conduct and share writing center research.

Speaker 4 will explore how replicating research projects like the Peer Tutor Alumni Project (Hughes, Gillespie, Kail), particularly when tailored to local context (R1, undergrad/grad highbred, public, land-grant), can provide another front to address the impact of writing centers on their campuses. This speaker argues that this kind of research, along with the inquiry advocated by others on this panel, advances another expertise that writing centers have: In this case, the powerful impact on another group of students integral to the success and mission of our colleges and universities: Our very own tutors.

After the presentations, the panel will invite the audience to share how they've worked to shape and assess professional/career development for their writing center.